

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1995

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ENRG, KE, FPOR

REF: (A) NAIROBI 7789, (B) NAIROBI 7744

1. DESPITE PREVIOUS ASSURANCES TO PUBLIC THAT KENYAN ELECTRICAL POWER SERVICE WOULD BE UNAFFECTED BY UGANDAN SUPPLY CUTS, EAST AFRICAN POWER AND LIGHTING (EAPL) RESORTED TO PARTIAL LOAD SHEDDING IN NAIROBI RESIDENTIAL AREAS WEEKS OF AUGUST 16 AND 23. ACCORDING TO EAPL ENGINEERING STAFF, INTERRUPTIONS NECESSARY IN VIEW OF REDUCED UGANDAN SUPPLY (10 MEGOWATTS VS 30 MEGOWATTS UNDER NORMAL CONDITIONS) AND POOR KENYAN RIVER FLOWS DURING AN UNUSUALLY DRY YEAR.

2. RATHER THAN SUBSTITUTE EXPENSIVE THERMAL POWER GENERATION, WHICH WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE CONSUMER BILLS, EAPL DECIDED TO RIDE OUT WHAT THEY EXPECT TO BE A TEMPORARY POWER SHORTFALL BY INTRODUCING STAGGERED INTERRUPTIONS. CENTER CITY AND INDUSTRIAL CONSUMERS, AS WELL AS ALL AREAS OUTSIDE NAIROBI, HAVE BEEN SPARED. EAPL
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ANTICIPATES AN INCREASE IN UGANDAN SUPPLIES TO 20 MEGOWATTS

IN NEAR FUTURE BUT WAS UNABLE TO PREDICT WHEN LOAN SHEDDING
COULD BE TERMINATED.

3. COMMENT: EAPL PROBABLY OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ITS
ABILITY TO SATISFY KENYAN DEMAND COUNTING ON ONLY TWO-
THIRDS NORMAL UGANDAN SUPPLY. DOMESTIC HYDRO-ELECTRIC
SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY REDUCED DUE ABNORMALLY
LOW 1976 RAINFALL. COMPANY MAY BE FORCED TO TAKE
FINANCIALLY UNPOPULAR DECISION TO INCREASE THERMAL POWER
GENERATION AS HOUSEHOLD TOLERANCE OF DAILY BLACKOUTS
WEAKENS. THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF SUCH A MOVE WAS
DEMONSTRATED BY A RECENT NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL QUESTIONING
EAPL'S COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC INTEREST IN LIGHT OF NEW
30 PERCENT INCREASE IN UTILITY CHARGES. CALLING ATTENTION
TO COMPANY'S HEALTHY DIVIDEND RECORD, NEWSPAPER CHALLENGED
EAPL TO DEVOTE CLOSER ATTENTION TO PUBLIC ECONOMY RATHER
THAN PRIVATE PROFIT.

DECON 8/23/77.
MARSHALL

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